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SUBJECT: MFA Legal Affairs Director New National Anti-Trafficking Coordinator

REF: 07 VIENNA 2932

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1.(U) At the March 10 cabinet meeting, the GOA appointed MFA Legal Affairs Director Elisabeth Tichy-Fisslberger as the new National Coordinator to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings. In this new position, Tichy-Fisslberger will coordinate cooperation between Austrian government agencies and NGOs, promote public awareness raising programs, and expand assistance projects in source countries. The appointment of a National Anti-Trafficking Coordinator is the latest in a series of GOA anti-trafficking measures in recent years. The GOA created an Anti-Trafficking Task Force in November 2004 and adopted a National Action Plan against Trafficking in 2007.

2.(U) In a first statement upon her appointment, Tichy-Fisslberger noted that "sensitizing" the public and government agencies was a prime goal. "Austria's legal framework is sufficient, but we must keep reminding all players of the extent of the problem of trafficking in human beings," noted Tichy-Fisslberger.

3.(U) The 51-year old Tichy-Fisslberger was previously posted in Dublin, London and Brussels and has extensive experience in European Union matters. She is married to an Austrian diplomat and has a 14-year old daughter.

Comment

14. (SBU) The Embassy has had contact with Tichy-Fisslberger on the visit to Austria of a PKK leader (reftel), and GOA issuance of temporary visas for Iranian religious minorities seeking refugee status in the U.S. She does not appear to be a hands-on, activist manager, and has come across as aloof in previous contacts.

15. (SBU) While certainly qualified, the well-connected Tichy-Fisslberger has so far not been a key actor in the anti-trafficking scene, and it is not clear what effect her appointment will have. Anti-trafficking activists had been skeptical regarding the appointment of a new National Coordinator to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings, noting that the GOA would not want a person from outside the government.

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